

REC
09/675,958

5/15/2000

REMARKS

Reconsideration is respectfully requested in light of the foregoing Amendment and remarks that follow.

Claims 65 and 154 – 315 are pending in the application, with claims 65, 181, 208, 235, 262, and 289 being the independent claims. Claims 154 – 315 are added. Claims 66 – 153 are cancelled. Claims 1-64 were previously cancelled. These changes are believed to introduce no new matter, and their entry is respectfully requested.

Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

In the Action, the Office rejected pending claims 65-153 as unpatentable in view of the combination of Heckel (U.S. Patent No. 6,036,601) in view of Gever, et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,329,994). With respect to the relevance of Heckel, applicant maintains the arguments discussed in the previously-filed Response of March 17, 2004. With respect to Gever, applicant respectfully submits that it is neither analogous, nor has the Office provided proper motivation to combine these two references. Specifically, applicant respectfully submits that the rejection is improper for lack of a motivation to combine Heckel and Gever.

Notwithstanding these qualifications, applicant respectfully provides the following remarks in light of the Interview with the Office on August 19, 2004.

Interview with Patent Examiner Jonathan P. Ouellette & Supervisory Primary Examiner John G. Weiss

Applicant respectfully thanks Examiner Ouellette and SPE Weiss for graciously agreeing to and providing the interview on August 19, 2004, as well as a follow-up telephonic discussion with Examiner Ouellette on September 9, 2004. On both occasions, applicant respectfully

discussed the outstanding rejections, presented proposed claim amendments, and enjoyed the resulting discussions of the proposed claim amendments and the cited references.

During the interview and subsequent discussion, the Office stated that the proposed claim amendments were believed to be patentable over the applied combinations of cited references. While applicant maintains a traversal of the rejections for at least the reasons discussed above and in the previous Response of March 17, 2004, applicant respectfully provides the foregoing claim amendments.

Applicant respectfully submits that the independent claims presented herein are therefore in condition for allowance. Furthermore, the claims depending from the independent claims are believed to be allowable for at least these reasons, and further in view of their own respective features. Withdrawal of the outstanding rejections is respectfully requested.

Information Disclosure Statement

Applicant respectfully submits an Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) including two references provided and described at the Interview of August 19, 2004, as well as a third reference from the International Search Authority, from a corresponding but expired international application, indicating that no search would be performed of the international application. Applicant respectfully requests that these references be placed in the file and reviewed by the Office.

Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of objection and rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider all currently outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn. Applicant believes that a full and complete reply has been made to the outstanding Office Action

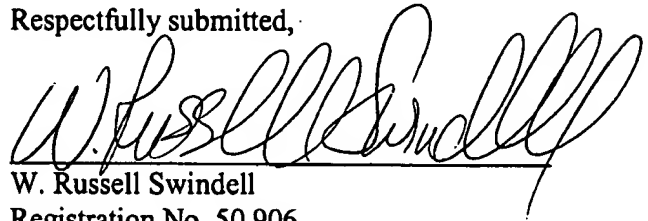
and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment and Reply is respectfully requested.

Dated: September 15, 2004

DC2-DOCS1-579463v4

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. Russell Swindell', written over a horizontal line.

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